

REMARKS

The Examiner is thanked for the due consideration given the application

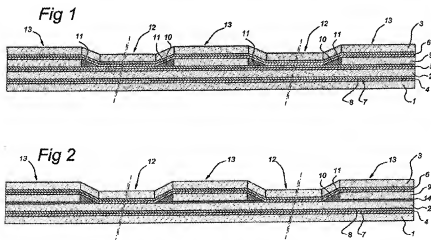
Claims 18 and 20-34 are pending in the application. By this amendment claim 19 has been canceled and its subject matter has been generally incorporated into claim 18.

No new matter is believed to be added to the application by this amendment.

Rejection Under 35 USC §103(a)

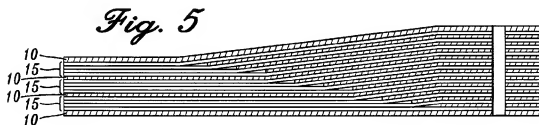
Claims 18-34 have been rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over WESTRE et al. (U.S. Patent 6,114,050) in view of BEHR et al. (U.S. Patent 6,428,905). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The present invention pertains to a laminate that is illustrated, by way of example, in Figures 1 and 2 of the application, which are reproduced below.



Figures 1 and 2 show metal layers (1-3, 9) and plastic bonding layers (4-6) situated between the metal layers (1-3, 9). Two external metal layers (1, 3) extending substantially continuously, and there is at least one internal metal layer (2, 9). At least one of the internal metal layers (9) has at least one opening (10) and, as is set forth in claim 1, "in that at a position of the opening (10) the other metal layers (1-3) and the plastic bonding layers (4-6) are bonded together to form a packet of lower thickness, **and at least one of the openings (10) is peripherally closed.**"

WESTRE et al. pertain to a hybrid laminate and skin panels of hybrid laminate. The Office Action refers to Figure 5 of WESTRE et al., which is reproduced below.



The Office Action refers to column 5, lines 5-25 of WESTRE et al., which discusses heat treatment and surface treatment of metallic foils in order to promote adhesion.

The introductory part of independent claim 18 of the present invention indeed appears to cover Figure 5 of WESTRE et

al. However, WESTRE et al. do not disclose an opening in an internal metal layer, in which opening the neighboring plastic bonding layers are continued and are bonded to each other, as is the case in the present invention.

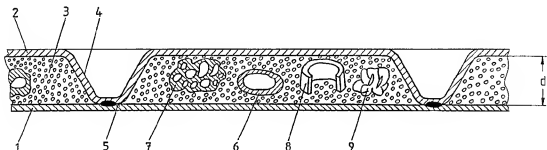
An implicit meaning of the wording "opening" is that it is closed at the periphery in all circumferential directions. This was positively phrased in dependent claim 19, which has now been incorporated into base claim 18.

It should be further noted that the main objective of the present invention is to make the laminate lighter. With the aim of applying local reinforcements, such as at the edges, additional metal layers may be positioned in between (as according to WESTRE et al., Figure 5). In the present invention this is carried out in an advantageous way by the use of an intermediate metal layer having local, peripherally closed openings within which the neighboring bonding layers are bonded to each other.

As a result, the intermediate metal layer forms a coherent structure which can be applied as a single metal sheet with openings. This is done at one go during the layup of the laminate, at the correct position between the other layers. This makes the application of such an intermediate layer much easier, at least in comparison to the application of loose reinforcement parts. The process of laying a puzzle in the mold is thereby prevented, and replaced by the application of a single coherent intermediate metal layer having openings.

These advantages were not discussed in the application as filed. However, they can be re-presented in the form of a Declaration if the Examiner desires.

BEHR et al. pertain to a double-layered sheet. The drawing figure of BEHR et al. is reproduced below.



As can be seen, the newly cited BEHR et al. patent relates to heavy sandwich constructions in the form of box shaped structures within which a fill has been accommodated. This publication is not related to laminates. Laminates do have a bond over their full surface.

The construction according to BEHR et al. only provides local spot welds, see for example U.S. Patent 4,559,274 as cited by BEHR et al. BEHR et al. disclose a conventional art (column 1, lines 1-30), according to which the fill is formed of a perforated aluminum sheet (column 1, lines 24- 13). The spot welds between the outer box shaped layers are positioned in the perforations of the aluminum sheet.

The Office Action does not provide arguments as to why the skilled person in the area of laminates would turn to BEHR et

al., after having considered WESTRE et al. BEHR et al. relates to heavy steel structures, for instance, for cars, and is not related to light weight laminates.

BEHR et al. teach toward the direction of spot welds and loosely positioned fill layers, which do not play a role at all in the laminates according to the present invention and also not in the state-of-the-conventional-art according to WESTRE et al. Thus, a combination of WESTRE et al. and BEHR et al. would not lead to the present invention at all. In regards to the fact that BEHR et al. is not related to light weight laminates, a skilled person would not

Therefore, one of ordinary skill and creativity would fail to produce claim one of the present invention from a knowledge of WESTRE et al. and BEHR et al. A *prima facie* case of unpatentability has thus not been made.

This rejection is believed to be overcome, and withdrawal thereof is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

The Examiner is thanked for considering the Information Disclosure Statement filed December 30, 2005 and for making an initialed PTO-1449 form of record in the application.

Prior Art of record but not utilized believed to be non-pertinent to the instant claims.

The rejection is believed to have been overcome obviated or rendered moot, and no issues remain. The issuance of

a Notice of Allowability is accordingly is respectfully solicited.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future submissions, to charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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